Is Oric Basic Microsoft signed?

compiled from newsgroups <comp.sys.oric> by André C.

Question from 'Zouplaz': Hi there... Long time ago I typed a small piece of code from a magazine, the purpose of this code was to prove that the Oric's Basic had been done by Microsoft. Was it a joke or the truth?

Peter 'TheSpider' P.: I am sure some of the real experts here will have a more defined answer. However, I just had a look through the Atmos Rom using a hex editor and could not find any mention of Microsoft at all. I would not be surprised if Tangerine had based Oric Extended Basic on Microsoft Basic. I am waiting with you for a clearer answer.

Steve M.: Tangerine obtained a license for their Microsoft Basic which is essentially what the Oric Basic is based around. They 'forgot' to get a license for the Oric, which is supposedly, why they were so intent on keeping the Rom details a bit of a secret. The sound commands were written by Paul Kaufman in Forth. Most of the rest was written by Andy Brown and Chris Shaw with Peter Halford writing the cassette routines.

Andre M.: It is true. There is the string «Microsoft!» in the ROM at e435h, slightly obfuscated. Which magazine was that?

Peter: Ok, thanks - found it now...

Column 1=Oric Address in Hex

Column 2=ROM Address in Hex Editor

Column 3=Value in Hex

Column 4=Value in Decimal

Column 5=Character (followed by decimal difference)

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E435   2435   A1   161    ! (-128)
E436   2436   54    84    T
E437   2437   46    70    F
E438   2438   8F   143    O (-64)
E439   2439   13    19    S (+64)
E43A   243A   8F   143    O (-64)
E43B   243B   52    82    R
E43C   243C   43    67    C
E43D   243D   89   137    I (-64)
E43E   243E   CD   205    M (-128)
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Definitely obscure but there, even if backwards also!

Geoff P.: Surely an anagram of OricSoft with a spare M left over.

Bob B.: The true story of the creation of Microsoft comes from the original people that set up OricSoft the wanted More so added an M for More onto OricSoft and hence we now have MicroSoft... Honest guv I aint lying its the truth and nothing but the truth!

Fabrice F.: Not so obscure... :-) These 10 bytes form two floating-point numbers, they have been placed just after the numbers used in the polynomial for the SIN function, so that eventual pirate companies would most likely have not spotted it. Note that this Microsoft signature is present at the same place (not at the same address, but still just after the SIN polynomial) in Apple2's Basic, with just some differences in the most significant bits... What I do not know is whether the signature was hidden or explained in the source listing... Even in a source listing, it would have been difficult to spot this signature, if it was expressed in floating point values or hexadecimal... So maybe it was a way to trace which company had provided the source listing to a pirate company :-)

Ventzislav T.: The same string is present in the Pravetz 8D ROMs as well (Original, Boby Rom and 8D Dos Rom), and I can tell you for sure that they did not have the source listing. Seems BRV missed this, when converting it to Cyrillic.

'Pe@ceR': Peter, I am amazed. How could you «decode» it like that? (i.e. -128, +64, -64 etc.). I wonder if Bill Gates did this himself :)

Peter: Simple. You could have done it also. We knew that the word MICROSOFT was there, and that the ASCII for C,R, & F,T were in the correct (backwards) order & spacing. I then worked with the other ASCII numbers to see how I could get the numbers to match the ASCII of the letters I wanted. When I saw that the differences were +/- 64 & 128, I was not surprised at all. What *exactly* did Bill actually do?

Steve M.: He nicked other people's work and passed it off as his own! I remember when

he said he didn't think there was any future in a WIMP system ! (Windows, Icon, Mouse, Pointer).

Peter: And that a PC would never need any more than 640K. These days you need at least 640M just to run the latest version of windows. No wonder I love Oric programming! Started back to work on SPAINT now that things are starting to get back to normal in the Spider household. Check out: <http://thespider.oric.org> for the latest version as it happens. I need to start a version system soon! LOL. Right now, it is on a bootable Sedoric 3.6 disk image, and my next update is to include use of 2 disk drives. Should be able to get working on that right after lunch and my honey-do list! ;) Seems Jede is having problems on the site, so use this address: <http://oricspider.home.insightbb.com/>.